

THE FULLNESS AND THE FILLING

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*“And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace”
John 1:16*

ONE Sabbath day I was staying in an Italian town on the other side of the Alps. Of course, the whole population was Romish. Two or three of us, therefore, being Protestants, held a little service for the worship of God in the simple manner that is our wont. After this, I went out for a walk. The weather being hot and sultry, I sought the outskirts of the town to get to as quiet and cool a spot as possible.

Presently I came to an archway at the foot of a hill, where there was an announcement that any person who would climb the hill with proper intentions should receive the pardon of his sins and five days' indulgence. I thought I might as well have five days' indulgence as anybody else, and if it were of any advantage, to have it laid by in store.

I cannot tell you all I saw as I went, first one way, and then another, up that hill. Suffice it to say that there was a series of little churches, through the windows of which you might look, as one in his boyish days looked through a peep-show. The whole scene and circumstance of the passion and death of Christ were thus modeled, beginning with His agony in the garden, where He was represented in a figure as large as life, with the drops of bloody sweat falling to the ground, the three disciples a stone's throw off, and the rest of the apostles outside the garden wall. Every feature looked as real as if one had been standing upon the spot.

I scrutinized each group narrowly and carefully read the Latin text which served as an index, till I reached the top of the hill, where I saw a garden, just like an English garden, and as I pushed open the door I faced these words, “Now there was a garden, and in the garden there was a new sepulchre.” Walking down a path I came to a sepulcher, so I stooped down and looked in, as Peter had done. There, instead of seeing a picture of the corpse of Christ, I read in gilded letters these words—of course, in the Latin tongue—“He is not here, for he is risen, come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

Passing on, I came to a place where His ascension was represented. On the summit was a large church, into which I entered. No one was there, yet the place for me had a marvelous interest. High up in the ceiling there swung a rude representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and round it were statues of the prophets, all with their fingers pointing up to Him.

There was Isaiah, with a scroll in his left hand, on which was written, “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Further on stood Jeremiah, and on his scroll was written, “Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, which was done unto me.” All round the church I read in great words, that were large enough to be seen, though they were blazoned on the top of the ceiling, “Moses and all the prophets spoke and wrote concerning him.”

Now, though I cannot take you to see that remarkable sight, which I shall never forget, I would fain bring before your mind's eye something like it. Suppose that all the saints who lived from the days of Adam, down to the times when Malachi closed the Old Testament, and that all the saints who lived in Christ's time, and then on through the early ages of the church in the days of Chrysostom, and Augustine, and all the holy men who afterwards gathered around the Reformers, and all who in every place have served God since then—suppose they all stood in one vast circle, to whom do you suppose they would every one point? To whom would they all bear witness?

Why, with outstretched arm, every one of them would turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and speak His praise. Could you then inquire into their individual history, you would find among them characters exceedingly diverse, though all remarkably beautiful, some renowned for courage, others for gentleness, some for patient endurance, others for diligent labor, and yet all inspired by a common faith, all of them aglow with fervent gratitude, all of them looking with steadfast gaze and love intense towards ONE from whom they had received every gift that profited them, and that One, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of men.

The rule would admit of not a single exception. From each man in his own proper position, from every man in his own particular calling, from all the individuals severally in their own personal experience, the innumerable voices, distinct, but blending in chorus, would go up from earth to heaven, saying, "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Then I think from the excellent glory would come a response. The inhabitants of heaven would echo back the strain, "Of his fullness have all we, the glorified spirits, received, and grace for grace." This is the testimony of the church militant, and of the church triumphant, yea, it is the testimony of all who in every place and at every time have come and put their trust under the shadow of His wings.

Our text seems to suggest two thoughts—*the fullness* and *the filling*—upon each of which I will attempt to say a little, a very little. With so infinite a theme, we can do no more than children do when they take up a little seawater in a shell, their tiny scoop cannot embrace the ocean. I stand on the narrow edge of a vast expanse and leave the boundless depths to your contemplation. *His fullness!* an inexhaustible reservoir. *Our filling!* an illimitable endowment. Beloved, the river of God, which is full of water, can well supply the little canals that are fed from such a fountain with grace for grace.

I. THE FULLNESS I said.

It is His fullness, the fullness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Oh! what a fullness He has! The fullness which *belongs to Him personally!* Note this well, forget it not. Our Redeemer is essentially God. By nature He is divine. He has condescendingly taken upon Himself our nature, and He is most truly and assuredly man. Very God! for to Him belong all be attributes of JEHOVAH. Very man! for when He took our flesh and blood, He accepted the entire sympathies of our creatureship.

In His complex nature, He possesses fullness. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He has the fullness of omnipotence, and all power is given unto Him as Mediator in heaven and in earth. Omnipresence is His to perfection, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I (He said) in the midst of them." He has essential wisdom. Even when on earth, "He did not commit himself, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." In Him is fullness of justice. The Father has given all judgment unto the Son. "Shall not God judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead?"

In Him is fullness of mercy, for "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." The attributes of God make up a perfect total. The unity, with all its uniqueness, is His. divisions and sub-divisions are ours. The fractional parts of which we take account are but the breaking up of a great fact to our weak understanding. Think as you may, your thoughts cannot describe or compass God, for God is all that is good and blessed. And as is God, so is Christ. All the divine attributes are contained and represented in Christ Jesus in their fullness, not diminished by His humiliation, but resplendent by His triumph.

"In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead." He is the express image of the Father's person, the brightness of His Father's glory, not mere glory, but the brightness of His Father's glory. What confidence this ought to inspire in our hearts! The fullness from which you and I derive the grace we receive is none other than the infinite fullness of God over all blessed forever, whose name Immanuel, God with us.

There was a fullness also in Christ in respect to His manhood. Nothing was lacking to Him that is involved in being by nature and constitution a perfect man. He was pure, He did not inherit any sin, His

disposition did not tend towards any evil. Still, all that pertains to the original creatureship of man as created by God did Christ possess in the fullness of development. Hence, my brethren, there is in Him at this moment a fullness of sympathy. He is not such a high priest as cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Do not suppose that Jesus is less human than you are yourselves, He is fully human. Do not imagine that He is less tender than you would be towards the weak and suffering, He is full of tenderness, His bowels melt with love. A mother has often a tenderness that we do not find in a father. Masculine strength and courage do not always blend with the gentle, sympathetic qualities of woman. Howbeit when God created man in His own image, male and female created He them. The virtues, if I may so say, of both sexes were combined in our Lord, the suavity as well as the staunchness—the feminine as well as the masculine of our common humanity.

Human nature in its totality and completeness was fully possessed and thoroughly represented by Him. The sympathetic nature which melts at a tear and smiles at the joy of others, was as truly His as the heroic nature that parleys not with fear, but acts with promptitude and suffers with fortitude, like a warrior in the hosts of the Lord. There is thus a fullness of humanity as well as a fullness of divinity in Christ Jesus, our Savior—a fullness of perfection in His blessed person which may well fix your trust and rivet your admiration.

In our Lord, likewise, there is what I may venture to call, for lack of a better word, *an acquired fullness*. He has sojourned on earth, and rendered entire and undeviating obedience to the law of God, having taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and by His righteousness earned wages, a fullness, an everlasting wellspring of merit. Throughout His whole life He honored the divine law and glorified God on the earth. In doing His Father's will, His action was so voluntary and so vicarious, that He has accumulated an inexhaustible fund of merit, which all of us who believe in His name may plead before the Father's throne.

More especially did His death consummate the obedience, and constitute its sterling worth, its intrinsic virtue. His death, with all its surroundings—from the bloody sweat in the olive garden to the last cry, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit"—was sublime. All through the scourging and the spitting, the shame, the wounding, the crucifixion, the thirst, the desertion, and the death itself, He was working out an atonement for us,

***"Bearing, that we might never bear
His Father's righteous ire."***

And now with Him risen from the dead, raised to the right hand of the Majesty on high, there is a fullness of prevalence in His intercession when He pleads His blood, a fullness of cleansing power when the Spirit applies the blood to the guilty conscience, a fullness of peace to the heart when His blood speaks better things than that of Abel. In that fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins there is a fullness that never can be exhausted by all the sin of man. He has finished the work which His Father gave Him to do. Now the covenant is ratified with Him that He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. In these respects, we are convinced that there is an acquired as well as a personal fullness in our precious Lord.

No less has He *a fullness of dignity, of high prerogative*. He is a Prophet. By Him are all His people taught, warned, counseled, and encouraged with a blessed hope. He is a Priest, and by Him they are cleansed from sin, and consecrated to God.

Moreover, He is also a King, spreading the aegis of protection over all His liege subjects, and ordaining peace for them. Under His beneficent rule, they prosper. You good Shepherd! You great Shepherd of the sheep! there is no office or obligation that was necessary for our welfare, but You have taken it, and undertaken it in our behalf. You are to us all that we require, and all that we could desire. Join all the qualities involved in name or fame that commend themselves most closely to your heart, because they meet your necessities, or draw forth your sympathies, and you shall find that He comprises

them all in liberal, lavish fullness. Nor has His prerogative any limit. As a Priest, who has once offered a sacrifice of everlasting prevalence, His absolution or His benediction is final and irrevocable. As a Prophet, His authority is unimpeachable, the authority with which He teaches allows of no appeal. As a King, He has right as well as might on His side.

In the midst of Zion, willing subjects yield to His beneficent sway, in the outer world, reluctant rebels must submit themselves to His scepter. He is no priest whose vain pretense has no valid prescript, He is no prophet whose teaching is uncertain in its tone, or limited in its range, He is no king whose prerogative is not sanctioned by His wisdom, and whose government awakens no fealty of love. But in the administration of all His offices, our Lord Jesus Christ shows a fullness of qualification, and gives a fullness of satisfaction. In such respects He has no rival, nor is there any room for a rival to arise.

And let me say here that the power with which our Lord exercises these offices may well command our devout confidence. Do you want to learn the truth? Oh! come to the Prophet of Nazareth, and you shall find that there is a satiety of truth in His teaching such as was never found in heathen augur, or even to the same extent in Hebrew seer! Or do you want acceptance before God? Oh! then, come you to the Priest who is not of the tribe of Levi, but a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, whose royalty confers dignity on His sacerdotal office! He can present your sacrifice with the much incense of His merit that is acceptable before the throne.

Or do you want strength? Do you need one to fight your battles, to take hold of the shield and the buckler, and draw out the spear, and handle the bow? Behold, the Hero of Israel, whose exploits are told in your songs—Jesus, the King by right of conquest, as well as by right divine, has a fullness of power and majesty with which no adversary can cope. He reigns. His reign is the consolation of His people, the guarantee of their peace.

These are bare outlines. Time would fail me to enumerate all His offices. They are very numerous, but however numerous, Christ possesses them all. He enjoys the prerogatives peculiar to them all in the fullest degree. He possesses the power to exercise them all to the fullest extent.

But in Christ there is verily a blessed fullness *of every kind of perfection*. Whatsoever there may be that is lovely or of good repute is to be found in Christ. All that is virtuous or amiable in the character of men, all that is noble and illustrious in the endowments that heaven bestows on the most privileged of creatures, our Lord possessed. It was said of Henry the Eighth that if all the likenesses of tyrants had been lost out of history, they might have been reproduced out of the one character of that monstrous tyrant-king.

So if all the holy features of patriarchs and prophets, of saints and martyrs, that ever lived were blotted from the canvas of history, they all might be painted afresh from the one life of the Divine person of our ever-adorable Lord Jesus Christ. In Him there was not only one perfection, but all perfections meet and blend to make up one matchless perfection. There was not one sweet alone in Him, but in Him all sweets combine in a perfect sweetness.

John has love, Peter courage, Paul zeal—each saint has his own peculiarity, but in Christ all the qualities of goodness and grace converge. He exhibits them in the highest degree and the purest harmony. After such manner are they incorporated in Him as to produce a character the like of which was never known before, nor ever shall be witnessed again.

And never forget that *a fullness of the Holy Spirit* abides in Christ. The Lord gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him. He has the residue of the Spirit. His is the head upon which the anointing oil is fully poured. We, who are but as the skirts of His garments, are favored with some droppings thereof, but the fullness of the anointing of the Spirit was bestowed upon Jesus Christ our Lord, and from Him His members must receive the portion they enjoy.

His fullness! I linger on the word, for I revel in the meditation. Such a fullness as admits of no diminution, for it is *an abiding* fullness. What though all the saints of every age have come to Christ, and drawn their supplies from Him, He is just as full as ever. Think not that those who first came drank of a copious fountain that has been partly drained by the myriads who have since slaked their thirst. The

apostles received of His fullness, and so do we, they without prejudice to us, we without prejudice to those who shall follow after us.

When I came to Christ eighteen hundred years after the apostles came, yet I received of the fullness at just the same rate as when Peter, John, or Paul received it. Should this dispensation last another thousand years, and some poor, trembling wretch should come to the foot of the cross to receive mercy, he will not receive Christ half full, but He shall receive of Christ's fullness, for it is an abiding fullness. It is never less than full, never can be more than full. In Him there is an infinity of grace and truth.

Such fullness is there in Him at all times, under all your circumstances of trial, aye, and under all conditions of sin too. The fullness of Christ to supply will always exceed the faith of the believer to seek. And when you feel your emptiness more than you ever did before, then you will set the most store upon His abounding towards us in all wisdom and prudence. Considering, then, His abiding fullness, His inexhaustible fullness, His available fullness, I entreat you to avail yourself of this fullness now without demur, without delay. As there is *a fullness*, so there is—

II. A FILLING.

This is to be our second part. I must speak of it with brevity. "Of his fullness have all we received." Surely, then, *all the saints were empty* before. You are empty, my brother, and so was Abraham, so was Paul. Grace, the free grace of God, has made all the difference between Peter and Judas, though the one repented and the other despaired, the one traveled the heavenly road, the other went down quickly to hell. They stood on equal footing in transgression, till grace made them to differ. What radical difference is there between one man and another from a legal point of view?

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." All alike have to come to Christ empty of merit, or they would never come at all. That was a pretty tale we heard the other day, and it points a right good moral. A worthy, consistent, industrious woman was married to a low, worthless, dissipated husband. Both of them, however, were alike ignorant of the Gospel. They came together to the house of prayer. They heard together the tidings of mercy, they each believed, and each of them received the Savior, and they both were saved the same way, they both found mercy on the same terms. To the rich, free, sovereign grace of God, they vied with one another in ascribing the praise. That is a fact. It occurred last week. I do not know whether this makes it more convincing to you, but I might say, as Elihu said to Job, "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living!"

Observe that the filling is universal. All the saints partake of it. "Of his fullness have *all we* received." There are manifold diversities of experience among the Lord's people, but in some things they share and share alike. Some saints do not undergo the stress of trial and tribulation that others pass through. Here, however, there is no partiality. They have, every one of them, received out of Christ's fullness. Not one of them could do without receiving it, not one of them could receive it from any other hand than that of the Divine Benefactor. They earned it not. They accepted it. They received it of Jesus Christ.

This is peculiar to the saints. While it says, "Of his fullness have all we received," manifestly a certain body of people have become partakers of a privilege which it is no less evident that all men have not received. What thousands and tens of thousands there are who, when invited to the Gospel feast, reject the call, "make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come." "All we!" that is, all of those who have believed.

And who are "*we*," or what are "*we*," that such grace should be given to us in preference to anybody else? Ah! brethren, little cause enough have we for self-satisfaction! On the score of desert no choice had ever fallen on us. We were the vilest, the least worthy, the least attractive, and in some respects, the least hopeful! Oh! grace, it is your wont into the unlikeliest hearts to come, and it is the glory of love divine to find in darkest spots a home! "All we," we who were once dead in trespasses and sins, we who were once lost like the prodigal son, lost like the wandering sheep, lost like the piece of

money, we who needed seeking, needed finding, need saving, yet of His fullness have all we received. Recollect that the reception is peculiar to believers, it does not go beyond them.

Be it clear, however, that there is, and must be, *a personal reception in every case*. “Of his fullness have *all* we received.” No one of us can receive it transmitted from another, but each one of us receives it directly from Him. Your father’s grace cannot save you. It was a wise speech of the wise virgins. When the foolish virgins said to them, “Give us of your oil,” they replied, “Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” Family piety involves responsibilities, but it cannot stand in the place of personal godliness.

Dear hearer, you must go to Christ for yourself. All who ever were saved have done so, and you certainly will not be saved unless you are led to do the same. It is a personal filling. “Of his fullness have all we received.”

The bounty is gratuitous. Notice the next words, “*and grace for grace*.” It is not said, “Of his fullness have all we purchased,” nor “Of his fullness have all we earned a share,” but it is all passive. We have received. What does the vessel do to fit itself for the water that flows into it? Why, it does nothing. All its doing can fit it to receive is an undoing, that is to say, it empties itself to prepare itself to be filled.

Oh! if any of you desire to find Jesus Christ, the doing must be in the way of undoing. You must be emptied to be filled. The preparation is a consciousness that you are not prepared. In such unpreparedness you are prepared for Christ. This is an enigma and a riddle. Those who think themselves prepared for Him are not so, but those who know that they are not prepared are just the souls upon whom His grace will come. Poverty, not riches; blindness, not sight; emptiness, not fullness; sinfulness, not virtue—these are the things Christ looks for.

He is come to seek and to save that which was lost, not that which had won victories, not that which was splendid in its own esteem, but that which was defeated, ruined, lost. If you are lost, He comes to seek and to save such as you are. Oh! you who were once lost, but now are found, bless His name that you have received of His fullness!

“*And grace for grace!*” What mean these words? We can only just touch them as a swallow with its wing touches the pool, we cannot pretend to enter into their depth. “Grace for grace.” Does that mean that those who receive grace under the old dispensation were afterwards led to receive the grace of the new dispensation? Does it mean that we who have the grace of conviction, with the Holy Spirit as a spirit of bondage, shall receive by and by the spirit of liberty, and get out of conviction, through conversion, into full pardon and enjoyment of peace with God?

Is that the grace, when grace turns into glory, and we come before the throne, does it mean grace by degrees, grace upon grace, a little grace to begin with, and more grace afterwards? “He giveth more grace,” grace following on grace, and further on, super-abounding grace, when grace turns into glory, and we come before the throne of grace forever and ever? Does it mean that God leads us on step by step, adding to our spiritual wealth, initiating us first into simple things, and afterwards leading us into deeper matters? “Grace for grace.”

Yes, it means that, but it means more. God gives *grace in preparation for further grace*—the grace of a broken heart—to make room for deep repentance and abhorrence of sin, the grace of hatred of sin to make way for the grace of holy and careful walking, humiliation, and faith in Jesus, the grace of careful walking to make room for the grace of close communion with Christ, the grace of close communion with the Lord Jesus Christ to make room for the grace of full conformity to His image, perhaps the grace of conformity to His image to make room for the higher grace of brighter views of Himself, and still closer incomings into the very heart of the Lord Jesus.

It is grace that helps us on in grace. When a beggar asks you for a penny and you give him one, he does not ask you for a sixpence, or if you give him a shilling, he would not consider that an argument why you should give him a sovereign. But you may deal thus with God. If you have only got, as it were, an ounce of grace, that is a reason why you should then pray God for a great weight of grace, and

afterwards for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Believe that He gives grace for grace, that is, grace that you may open your mouth for more grace. The grace you have expands your heart, and gives you capacity for receiving yet more grace.

Do you not send your child to school to learn ABC? You may call that the grace of learning his alphabet. Yes, but it is preparatory to his learning to read the spelling book. Well, but what does he learn to read the spelling book for? Why, that is a preparation for something else. So one grace gives us a preparation for another grace, and thus as we have more grace we realize the blessedness of this divine filling out of His fullness.

Or suppose we read the passage thus—*grace answerable to grace*—and even this will admit of two constructions. Let God give me grace to be a preacher, He will surely give me grace to discharge the office. Perhaps He has given you grace to teach in a Sabbath school, then you want a further supply of grace to enable you to be an efficient teacher. Peradventure you have the grace of resignation to suffer for Christ's sake, you will need the grace of patience to support you in the midst of pain or persecution. You are called to pray, and you yield yourself up to be a wrestler with God in prayer. This is a great grace.

Oh! may you have grace answerable to that grace, that when you get with the angel by the brook Jabbok, you may take hold of His strength, plead His promise, His covenant, and His oath, and never let Him go until He bless you. Thus, a halt and fainting Jacob comes off as a prevailing Israel. May we thus ever have grace answerable to grace. "Grace for grace" may imply grace received by us answerable to the grace that is in Christ.

Oh! that we Christians had grace in some measure commensurate with the grace that is treasured up for us in Him! All that is in Him belongs to you. Then the degree of your daily supplies ought to be proportionate to His ample, unlimited wealth and fullness.

A young heir to a large estate, though not of full age, generally gets an allowance made to him by the executors, or the trustees, or the Court of Chancery, suitable to the position he is presently to occupy. If he has £100,000 a year in prospect, he would hardly be limited to a penny a week, like a poor man's child. We cannot suppose that he would have a mean allowance made him such as would barely enable him to live in a humble cottage on the rich domain he is entitled to. Oh! no, that would be a meager pittance out of all proportion to his position.

When I see one child of God always mourning, another always doubting, and yet another always scheming, I feel a kind of disappointment, I see they are living below their privileges. They do not seem to have grace in possession answerable to the grace they have in reversion.

We always inculcate the propriety, on the part of all our people, of living within their incomes, but I will defy the child of God to live beyond his income in a spiritual sense. You that have but little spending money are like the elder brother in the parable. You say, "Thou never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends," and your Father replies, "Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine." If you do not have it, it is your own fault, it is all there, and is freely yours. You have but to ask, and you shall receive, to seek, and you shall find.

Oh! could we once get grace in us at all like the grace that is in Christ, what Christians we should be! No longer starlight Christians and moonlight Christians, but sunlight believers, letting our light shine before the sons of men. Oh! to be among the three Mighties of our royal David! May each of us covet such a position as this, and God grant it to us for His love's sake!

"Grace for grace" obviously means *grace in abundance*. Like the waves of the sea, when one comes, there is another close behind it. Before you can say that one is gone, there is another coming to fill its place. There they come. Who shall count them? In long succession, wave follows wave. So is God's grace. "Grace for grace." One grace has hardly come into your soul but what there is another one.

You have heard the story of Rowland Hill having a hundred pounds entrusted to him for the benefit of a poor minister. He thought that if he sent him the hundred pounds, it would be too large a sum to give him all at once. He would scarcely know how to husband it, and perhaps he would not be so

thankful for it as if he had it doled out in smaller amounts. So he sent him five pounds, and wrote in the letter, "More to follow." Letters did not come often in those days of nine penny or eighteen penny postage, but in about another week he forwarded another five pounds, and a note with it, "More to follow." After a short interval he did the like again, still saying, "More to follow." So it went on for ever so long, always with, "More to follow," till the dear good man, I should think, must have been at his wits' end to know what could follow when so many good presents came to one who needed them so much.

Now that is just how God has done with me, and I believe He is doing the same with all of you who are His people. He has sent you a mercy, and when He has sent it, you might have seen, if you had looked at the envelope, that it was an earnest of further benefits and benefactions—"More to follow." The mercy you have received today has written upon it legibly, "More to follow," and that which will come tomorrow will have upon it, "More to follow." "Grace for grace." Oh! sing unto Him a new song. Let Him have fresh songs for fresh mercies, and as He multiplies the mercy, so do you multiply the praises you ascribe to His name.

"Grace for grace!" Does it not mean *grace from Him to produce grace in us*? We receive from the fullness of Christ, of His grace, in order that it may be a living seed that shall produce grace in us as its natural fruit. The grace of gratitude should be produced in us by the grace of generosity from God. We ought to be gracious with a holy joyfulness for all His goodness. I hope we shall have the grace of patience under all sufferings, and the grace of zeal in all our labors.

At a time like this, my brethren, when we are seeking the conversion of sinners with special efforts, may we have grace from Jesus that shall make all the graces fruitful and fragrant in us! So shall we be to the Savior as a garden of olives and pomegranates, of lilies and sweet flowers, and may He take a delight in us!

When Cyrus took the Greek Ambassador through his garden, he challenged him to admire its charms. The Spartan approved all he saw, but still his admiration was cool and critical. "This garden," said its master, "yields me more pleasure and satisfaction than you can imagine, or I can express." "And why?" asked the visitor. "Because," replied Cyrus, "I planted every tree in it myself. I planned all the paths, and all the flowers have I reared. No hand but mine has dug the soil, tended the plants, pruned the trees, or done aught beside but my own." His toil and his trouble thus endeared the place to the king.

So, truly, Christ can say when He looks upon His people, "There is a fruitful bough there, I pruned that. He was sick, long laid aside from business. He feared his family would be starved, I was pruning him then, but I love the fruit that is on him because I know how it came there. That plant yonder which is blooming now and shedding such a sweet perfume of love, well do I recollect when it was drooping and ready to die. I came and watered it. She, timid disciple, would say, 'Blessed be the gentle hand that shed the dew and poured nourishment on my poor, parched, and withered root!'"

Yes, the Savior gives us "grace for grace" that we may produce grace. I leave the thought with you for meditation, and the issues for your edification, only praying that His Holy Spirit may work in you "grace for grace."

Oh! that all of you might receive grace from Him. You will never get grace anywhere else. Go to Him at once by faith, with humble prayer. Plenteous grace with Him is found, all the grace you shall ever require between now and glory you shall find stored up in Him. His grace is our benediction. Of it may you one and all partake! Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.